

**Statement on Senate Confirmation
of Norman Y. Mineta as Secretary
of Commerce**

July 22, 2000

I am grateful that the Senate has acted expeditiously to confirm Norman Y. Mineta as Secretary of Commerce, and am pleased that he was sworn in to office today.

As a Member of Congress for 21 years, Mr. Mineta was a leader on trade, technology, and other issues critical to the emerging digital economy. He brings to his new post not only an in-depth understanding of American business and the needs of our high-tech economy but also a deep concern for people—especially those not yet fully participating in this economy. He will play a crucial role in keeping our economic strategy on track, opening trade around the world, investing in our people, promoting high technology, and bridging the digital divide.

Mr. Mineta also has been a passionate voice for opportunity and justice for all. Stirred by his experiences as a young boy during World War II, when he and his family were relocated to a Japanese-American internment camp, he has fought tirelessly to ensure that others are spared such injustice. I am proud to welcome him as the first Asian-Pacific American ever to hold a post in the President's Cabinet and congratulate him on his confirmation.

**Remarks to the Community at Camp
Foster Marine Base in Okinawa**

July 22, 2000

Thank you. Well, this is the largest crowd I have ever addressed at this late hour. Hello, U.S. forces, Okinawa!

Thank you, General Hailston, General Smith, General Hughey, Admiral Schultz, Colonel Sullivan. Let's give another round of applause to Staff Sergeant Wehunt. He did a good job for you up here, didn't he? *[Applause]*

I'm delighted to be here with my daughter, Chelsea, and Ambassador Foley. We're glad to be here. Thank you. We were supposed to do this tomorrow, but I think you know that I have to leave early to try to go back

to the peace talks at Camp David on the Middle East. And I hope we will have your thoughts and prayers. And that's why we can't do it tomorrow.

But now I will go back in the right frame of mind, since I spent the night with you. And when I fly back home to peace in the Middle East, maybe you'll be going to Okuma instead of listening to me give a speech.

This is a really beautiful place, and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to come here and to see the impact of your service here. In spite of how beautiful Okinawa is, I know you're still a long way from home. So let me begin, on behalf of every American citizen, by thanking our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines and your families for your service here for the United States.

Earlier this month, I spent the Fourth of July, my last Fourth of July as President, in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty on the flight deck of the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy*. On the very first Fourth of July back in 1776 George Washington was not in Philadelphia when the Declaration of Independence was signed. Instead, he was with his troops in New York, in Manhattan, as the British ships landed just a few miles away on Staten Island. When the Declaration of Independence arrived from Philadelphia, General Washington had it read aloud to his troops so they would understand that the success of America depended upon the success of our military. It was true 224 years ago; it remains true today.

Thanks to you, the work you do everywhere, and here with our ally Japan, we live in peace. There is peace here, in part because III MEF is here, with the 3d Marine Division; the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing; the 3d Force Service Group; the Marine Corps Base, Camp Butler; the Air Force's 18th Wing; the Army's 10th Area Support Group; the Navy's Task Force 76; and Fleet Activities Okinawa. And everybody I didn't mention, cheer for yourselves here. *[Applause]*

All of you know well the sad and difficult history of the Battle of Okinawa. On Friday I had the honor of visiting the Cornerstone of Peace park. The names of all who died are inscribed on the walls there, Japanese